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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 478 - JANUARY 12, 1978

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING
PARIS FOR NICHOLAS MURPHY
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF MISSION

1. ARABS. ALGERIAN PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE IS CONCLUDING A WEEK-LONG TOUR OF THE EASTERN ARAB STATES, INCLUDING STOPS IN IRAQ, KUWAIT, BAHRAIN, QATAR, THE UAE, PDRY, THE YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC, SAUDI ARABIA, SYRIA, AND JORDAN. HE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF A JUDICIOUS STATESMAN WHILE FIRMLY OPPOSING SADAT'S INITIATIVE. THE ALGERIANS DO NOT ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT SADAT CAN SPEAK FOR THE ARABS AND THEREFORE OPPOSE THE ENTIRE PROCESS STARTED BY SADAT IN NOVEMBER.

2. BOUMEDIENE SEEMS TO HAVE STRESSED WITH THOSE WHO STRONGLY OPPOSE THE SADAT INITIATIVES -- IRAQ, SYRIA, AND PDRY -- THE NEED TO PUT ASIDE THEIR DIFFERENCES. HE URGED THE IRAQIS, IN PARTICULAR, TO GET IN STEP WITH THE OTHERS WHO FORMED A SO-CALLED FRONT OF "STEADFASTNESS" AT TRIPOLI AND TO MODERATE THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD DAMASCUS. ON THE QUESTION OF IRAQI-SYRIAN RECONCILIATION, BOUMEDIENE

APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL. THE IRAQIS REPORTEDLY TOLD BOUMEDIENE THAT THEY WOULD DROP TWO OF THE CONDITIONS THEY HAD LAID DOWN FOR RECONCILIATION -- SYRIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON AND THE EXPLICIT SYRIAN RENUNCIATION OF UNSC RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338. NEVERTHELESS, THE IRAQIS INSISTED ON A SYRIAN RENUNCIATION OF EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WITH ISRAEL.

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THE IRAQIS, MOREOVER, SEEM TO HAVE STOPPED MEDIA ATTACKS ON THE SYRIANS.

3. OUR EMBASSY IN DAMASCUS COMMENTED THAT IF THIS REPORT IS TRUE, IT WOULD BE THE BEST INDICATION IN SOME TIME THAT THE IRAQIS ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN BECOMING RECONCILED WITH THE ASSAD REGIME. THE SYRIANS, FOR THEIR PART, HAVE BEEN AVOIDING ANY CRITICISM OF IRAQ IN PUBLIC MEDIA AND WOULD WELCOME IRAQI ADHERENCE TO THE TRIPOLI FRONT AS A STEP TOWARD A BROADER IRAQI-SYRIAN ACCOMMODATION.

4. THE TRUE MEASURE OF BOUMEDIENE'S SUCCESS WILL BE WHETHER IRAQ ATTENDS THE NEXT ANTI-SADAT SUMMIT. WE HAVE HAD INDICATIONS THAT IF THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENT WERE CONVINCED THAT THE IRAQIS WERE MOVING CLOSER TO THE POSITION OF THE OTHER TRIPOLI SUMMIT STATES, THEN THE ALGERIANS WOULD ATTEND A SUMMIT IN BAGHDAD. IF THE IRAQIS DID NOT MOVE IN THIS DIRECTION, BOUMEDIENE WOULD CALL FOR A SUMMIT IN ALGIERS.

5. WITH REGARD TO JORDAN AND THE MORE MODERATE ARAB

STATES OF THE PENINSULA, THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENT DID NOT ATTEMPT TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR HIS ANTI-SADAT STAND BUT SIMPLY PRESENTED HIS CASE. HE ARGUED THAT SADAT WILL NOT SUCCEED IN REACHING A SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL WHICH OTHER ARABS CAN ACCEPT. MOREOVER, SADAT IS LIKELY TO MAKE A SEPARATE DEAL WITH ISRAEL WHICH WOULD SPLIT THE ARAB WORLD. BOUMEDIENE ASSERTED THAT EGYPT CANNOT OBTAIN ADEQUATE CONCESSIONS FROM ISRAEL UNLESS EGYPT HAS A CREDIBLE MILITARY POSTURE, WHICH CAN ONLY BE SUPPLIED BY THE SOVIETS. MOREOVER, SADAT HAS MADE A SERIOUS ERROR IN RELYING SOLELY ON THE US, SINCE THE US WILL NOT SUPPORT HIM BY PRESSING THE ISRAELIS.

6. WHILE THESE ARGUMENTS PROBABLY WILL NOT WIN ADDITIONAL
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SUPPORT FOR THE ANTI-SADAT CAMP, THEY MAY MAKE MODERATE ARAB LEADERS MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT OPENLY SUPPORTING SADAT. MOREOVER, ACCORDING TO THE BAHRAINI FOREIGN MINISTER THE IMPACT OF BOUMEDIENE'S ARGUMENTS, AND THOSE OF OTHER ANTI-SADAT LEADERS, GROWS STRONGER AS TIME PASSES WITHOUT

FURTHER ISRAELI CONCESSIONS. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT THE AMIR, WHO PERSONALLY SUPPORTS SADAT, LISTENED TO BOUMEDIENE WITH GREATER CARE THAN HE HAD TO ASSAD AND BECAME LESS INCLINED THAN BEFORE TO EXPRESS HIS PRO-SADAT FEELINGS. (SECRET)

7. EGYPT. THE ISSUE OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IS CAUSING PRIVATE CONCERN AND APPREHENSION EVEN AMONG MEMBERS OF THE EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATING TEAM, EMBASSY CAIRO NOTED. THE QUESTION HAS BECOME A MAJOR EGYPTIAN PREOCCUPATION, WITH SOME EGYPTIANS FEARFUL THAT ISRAEL'S WILL TO SUCCEED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN EGYPT'S. MOST PRESS EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES HAVE ADDRESSED THE ISSUE, BUT IN A GENERALLY UNEMOTIONAL MANNER, THE EMBASSY COMMENTED. (CONFIDENTIAL)

8. ISRAEL. ASSESSING THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT'S "NEW ECONOMIC POLICY" AFTER TWO MONTHS, EMBASSY TEL AVIV SAID TH HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD CRITICISM OF THE POLICY'S SPECIFICS BUT MOST ISRAELIS SEEM TO SUPPORT THE IDEA THAT A REDUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE ECONOMY, WHICH THE POLICY IS DESIGNED TO AFFECT, IS DESIRABLE. THE INITIAL INFLATIONARY IMPACT OF THE MEASURES WAS 11 PERCENT ABOVE THE NORM, BUT NOTHING MUCH IS DIFFERENT THAN IT WAS UNDER THE PREVIOUS SYSTEM. ONE POINT ON WHICH ALL OBSERVERS AGREE, THE EMBASSY COMMENTED, IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S TIMING IN ANNOUNCING THE PLAN WAS FORTUNATE
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SINCE IT HAS BEEN OVERSHADOWED BY MIDEAST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS. (CONFIDENTIAL)

9. LEBANON. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE OF OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE IN BEIRUT, THE SOUTHERN LEBANESE TOWN OF BINT JBAIL WHICH FORMERLY HAD 30,000 INHABITANTS, IS NOW DESERTED BY THE LEBANESE. THE PRESENT OCCUPANTS ARE PALESTINIANS AND FIGHTERS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS IRAQ, SOUTH YEMEN, SOMALIA, AND SYRIA. (CONFIDENTIAL)

10. LIBYA. THE IRAQI ARMY HAS REPORTEDLY AGREED TO SEND MILITARY INSTRUCTORS TO LIBYA. A PREVIOUS PLAN TO USE JORDANIAN INSTRUCTORS HAS BEEN BOGGED DOWN BY POLITICAL EVENTS THAT PUT TRIPOLI AND AMMAN AT ODDS OVER THE SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE. JORDAN, HOWEVER, IS APPARENTLY STILL WILLING TO SEND A FEW INSTRUCTORS FOR USE IN THE LIBYAN MILITARY ACADEMY IF A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED WITH LIBYA, AS NOTED EARLIER.

11. ,ETAILS OF ANY PLANS BY IRAQ TO SEND INSTRUCTORS TO LIBYA ARE UNKNOWN. THE APPROVAL OF THE PROJECT BY THE

ARMY MAY BE ONLY A TECHNICALITY AND A POLITICAL DECISION COULD STILL BE PENDING. QADHAFI MAY HOPE THAT CLOSER MILITARY RELATIONS WITH BAGHDAD FOSTERED BY THE USE OF IRAQI INSTRUCTORS WILL NOT ONLY BE BENEFICIAL TO HIS ARMED FORCES BUT WILL HAVE POLITICAL BENEFITS AS WELL IN HIS CONTINUING EFFORTS TO FORGE A UNITED REJECTIONIST FRONT. (SECRET) CHRISTOPHER

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